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Kacmaz Erk, G. (2017). Dublin in Cinematic Memory. In ICONARCH III International Congress of Architecture: Memory of Place in Architecture and Planning Proceedings (1 ed., Vol. 2, pp. 501-517). Konya: Selcuk University, Faculty of Architecture and Chamber of Architects, Konya Branch.

Published in:
ICONARCH III International Congress of Architecture: Memory of Place in Architecture and Planning Proceedings

Document Version:
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Queen's University Belfast - Research Portal:
Link to publication record in Queen's University Belfast Research Portal

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Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

KEYNOTE SPEECH
(30 Ağustos Hall, 12 May 2017-Friday, 11.50-12.20)

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Dublin in Cinematic Memory

DUBLIN IN CINEMATIC MEMORY

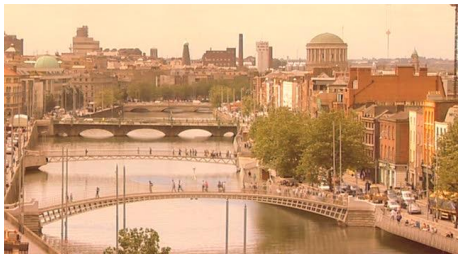
GÜL KAÇMAZ ERK[1]

ABSTRACT

This study is on architecture, the city, film, and memory. Through the analysis of two contemporary Dublin films, *Goldfish Memory* and *Adam and Paul*, the following research questions are discussed: How can cinematic representations of cities contribute to memory making in these complex urban environments? And specifically, what do its cinematic representations in the Celtic Tiger period reveal about contemporary Dublin and spatial memory?

Keywords: Architectural/urban space, fiction film, collective memory/spatial memory, aerial and street view, contemporary Dublin

Aerial view



Goldfish Memory

Adam and Paul

Street view

Goldfish Memory

Adam and Paul

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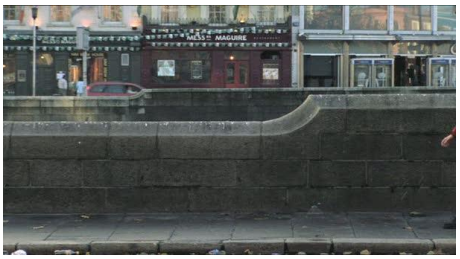
Waterfront

Goldfish Memory



Adam and Paul

CINEMATIC MEMORY OF DUBLIN

> The landscape of the contemporary city seems to be composed of conflicting fragments, slices or framed views first cut out and extracted from the city fabric, then set up and juxtaposed against each other.
> **Christine Boyer** (1994, p412)

1. CITYSCAPE, OR THE AERIAL VIEW AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY

In the opening scenes of *Goldfish Memory* and *Adam and Paul*, we are introduced to Dublin from high above. Liz Gill's *Goldfish Memory* starts with Modernist aerial views showing the river Liffey and its bridges at the heart of the city as urban landscapes, and the busy life around it from above using different viewpoints. The high-angle shots that the city and strolling Dubliners are portrayed in different light conditions look like gigantic landscape paintings. As the fixed camera zooms in frame by frame, the spectator discovers that these well-composed golden images that resemble idealised, almost utopian, cityscapes are far from being part of a coherent whole that Modernists would long for. *Goldfish Memory*, instead, frames a collection of fragmented and hybrid urban imagery, both historical and new, as its camera wonders around the city like Alice getting into the lives of others in Wonderland.

Unlike *Goldfish Memory*, which starts with a bird's eye view of central Dublin, Lenny Abrahamson's *Adam and Paul* begins in the middle of nowhere -but definitely just outside of Dublin as we can identify the listed Poolbeg Chimneys in the distance- emphasising that the two protagonists are outcasts. Adam and Paul wake up in open air perceiving the city, again, with a view from a high angle but far far away. Except the tall structure of the plant chimneys, Dublin is not rendered recognisably, and certainly not romantically as in *Goldfish Memory*. Portrayed from the outside, it looks like a grey, bleak and suspicious post-industrial city. When the "lads" finally start walking, they find themselves in the (now demolished) 1960s flats in Ballymun on the north side of Dublin.

These opening scenes set the tone of both films. The Dubliners portrayed in *Goldfish Memory* belong to the stylish city and the city belongs to them, whereas the Dubliners in *Adam and Paul* are not welcomed to their own city, not even to "the flats." No matter what they do, they cannot be a part of the urban environment; as marginals, they find themselves pushed out of the city both at the beginning and the end of the film. The warm earth colours of Dublin in *Goldfish Memory* embrace its inhabitants whereas the cold blues and greys of the city in *Adam and Paul* push people away. Film scholar Paul Grainge articulates the use of colour as "a means of creating cinematic 'feel' for memory and nostalgia" (2003, p17). *Goldfish Memory* and *Adam and Paul* capture cinematic memory of Dublin in film time.

1.1 City from above: the aerial view

In relation to the aerial views of Paris represented in 19th-century photography and Impressionist paintings of Claude Monet and Gustave Caillebotte, architectural historian and theorist Anthony Vidler reflects: "Significantly, the camera, as well as the painting, recorded the life and forms of the street as seen from above, from the apartment that both witnessed and participated in the society below. The monumentalization of the public realm had united façade with façade, public life and private, in a common space that no longer remained attached solely to the level of movement but was defined vertically by the uniform cornices and the perspective views" (2011, p105). Vidler explains how the aerial view, the view from above unites the city both horizontally and vertically. This idealistic, even romantic approach, "the Corbusian gaze" (2011, p327), distanced from the ground and the city provides increased purity and objectivity. Vidler refers to aerial photographs as "still lifes of a city in suspension from time" (2011, p342). He writes: "For Le Corbusier only an aerial photograph reveals the whole truth, shows what is invisible from ground level" (2011, p320).

Urban historian Christine Boyer (1994, p41-46) also refers to "viewing the city from a towering structure or looking down at the world from an airplane." She says: "The vertical bird's-eye view thus called for a new organization of the city… into a structured and utopian whole" that is homogeneous and ordered. Like Vidler, Boyer links the aerial view to Le Corbusier's Modernist planning approach in the 1920s and 1930s. Referring to Gertrude Stein and Cubist painting she talks about abstraction, reduction of depth, elimination of detail and composition with simplified forms. These same characteristics are seen in the flattened and fragmented planning approach in the 20th century through city maps and modern panoramic vision. A two-dimensional map can be considered as an abstracted aerial view. The Modernist model making similarly detaches the building from its context and views architecture from above.

The power of the aerial view is exemplified in a 7-minute video, *207m Chimney Climb*, published on YouTube on 14 November 2016 by OJ Adventures (www.youtube.com/watch?v=FvAWAHczOYs, accessed 27 March 2017). Shot mostly with a head camera, the video represents contemporary Dublin from high above as Oliver (not Johan) climbs one of the chimneys of the ESB's Poolbeg Generating Station on the south bank of Dublin port. These are the tall chimneys Adam and Paul view from a distance. The first 5 minutes of the video show his intimate and tactile relationship with this industrial structure, not in service since 2010. When we finally reach the top, which is the equivalent of the height of a building with more than 50 storeys, the surreal panoramic view is just the opposite of the previous intimate, tactile experience: distant, flattened, and even abstract. From this altitude, the sea and the sky become one; the land is ordered and patterned with limited texture.

The familiarity of an audience with the city represented in a film varies. The spectator may have lived in that city; they may have visited the city, or may know the city through its representations, such as photographs or a novel set on that particular site. Alternatively, the spectator may not recognise the city at all. When the audience is familiar with the filmic city, cinematic images are added onto people's existing urban memories. Alternatively, for a new city, one creates a new slot in the "memory bank." Since understanding one's surroundings has been a vital component of human survival for centuries, in this new situation, the spectator associates the place with other places they have been to. In any of the situations described above, urban panoramas framed from a high altitude in a film are valuable because they represent the "big picture," providing a holistic view of the place and enabling clear visualisation. "Our sense of an urban totality has been fractured long ago," (Boyer 1994, p375) and aerial views help to put the city together. Having said that, in "The City Seen from the

Aeroplane: Distorted Reflections and Urban Futures," urban theorist Nathalie Roseau criticises such a totalising approach to architectural space: "there are many nuances and mechanisms that escape those who see from the air. This apparently global gaze of the view from above expunges those scales, those articulations and rough patches that nevertheless give form to the spaces and their attendant practices that are found at ground level" (Dorrian and Pousin 2013, p215).

1.2 Irish cinema, Dublin and Celtic Tiger

The main focus and locale of Irish cinema throughout the 20th century were (mostly stereotypical imagery of) rural and coastal Ireland. Film scholars often discuss the beauty of this rural landscape as an Irish film cliché. For several decades, the urban setting represented the evil, unknown and unpredictable, whereas the rural, with its beautiful wild nature and farm animals, represented the good, familiar and predictable if not a dream. This nostalgic approach, linked to traditional values of family, religion, and nation in Ireland, has changed especially after the turn of the millennium. The Republic of Ireland experienced a fast economic growth, and this "Celtic Tiger" between 1995 and 2007 triggered a rapid architectural and urban transformation in the country, especially in Dublin, in the last two decades. As a result of new urban infrastructure, housing development, large-scale construction and urban redevelopment projects, the population of the Georgian capital city grew to include former emigrants and new immigrants, especially from Europe. The small Viking settlement of the 9th century turned into a global capitalist city during this boom. The urban regeneration changed the focus of local filmmakers from the rural to the urban Ireland in the first decade of the 21st century.

About Celtic Tiger cinema, film scholar Stephen Boyd writes: "These new representations of Dublin, stemming from roughly the year 2000, depict a dichotomy between a new affluent urban middle-class, and conversely, the social decay and outsider lives of those left behind by the economic boom" (Conolly and Whelan 2011, p122). These two urban groups living different lives in the same city are the protagonists of our Dublin films both released in 2004. *Goldfish Memory* depicts Dublin's "privileged" middle-class, and *Adam and Paul* represents its undervalued urban poor (including the working class, the homeless, the unemployed, single parents, and immigrants). These two groups rarely interact as the middle-class stays mostly in their homes and indoors, while likes of Adam and Paul inhabit the back streets.

Boyer claims "our desire for authentic memories and city experiences reveals an empathy for lost totalities, even though no one actually speaks out in favor of a unified city. Paradoxically, we seem to recognize that struggles over good city design are always multistructured, requiring alternative viewpoints and spectator positions, and we do seem aware of the exclusions our matrix engenders" (1994, p4). There is no unified city. There is no one city. Or at least one's "constructed totality" (1994, p5) is different from the territory of the others' who spare the same city. The contemporary city is a piecemeal collection of nodes and paths, generated not only by physical experiences but also their (visual) representations. These urban nodes could be buildings, interior or exterior spaces and places. The paths shape the mobile urban experience as they take "the flaneur" from a node to the other.

With its urban network of nodes and paths, contemporary Dublin is in the foreground as a character in *Goldfish Memory* and *Adam and Paul*. *Goldfish Memory* gathers the stories of a bunch of loosely related Dubliners who live bohemian lives during the Celtic Tiger years of the city. They spend their time partying, socialising, having rather short relationships, and enjoying urban living. Film scholar Martin McLoone calls *Goldfish Memory* a utopian film (McIlroy 2007, p213). If Gill's movie is the bright side of Dublin, Abrahamson's is the dark side. *Adam and Paul* stands for a dystopian Dublin. The two unwanted drug addicts wander in

and around the city during the economic expansion looking for drugs, money, food, and companionship. Adam and Paul explore the city, mostly in open air, looking at it from an alternative point of view. The camera does not visit cafes, bars and modern houses, but social housing and run-down streets.

Goldfish Memory is the rise of urban living while *Adam and Paul* is its fall. A new Dublin - hip, cool and trendy- is balanced with a grey depressing city in cinematic memory. Contemporary Dublin has alternate faces made up of an accumulation of its nodes experienced by its inhabitants. The pleasant 'touristic Dublin' represented in *Goldfish Memory* overrides *Adam and Paul*'s brutal 'marginal Dublin'. In *New Irish Storytelling*, film scholar Diog O'Connell talks about the alienating and fragmented urban space in *Adam and Paul*, portrayed without romanticising the urban deprivation (2010 p98).

It is significant to understand a city through its representations, especially cinematic reconstructions. Film is as close as we can get to the "actual" experience. Cinema is spatial because of containing and representing architecture realistically, temporal because of sound and movement, abstract because of framing and projecting space on a 2-D surface, and most importantly narrative because of montage. That is why film captures the aura of a place in a way other forms of art and modes of representation cannot.

Film is also the most effective representation to store, evoke and/or generate memory. Thus our low-budget Celtic Tiger films set and shot in Dublin point the discussion towards two questions. How can cinematic representations of cities contribute to memory making in these complex urban environments? One can argue that spatial reconstruction in cinema helps spatial recollection in memory. And specifically, what do its cinematic representations in the Celtic Tiger period reveal about contemporary Dublin and spatial memory?

1.3 The collective memory of the city

The aerial view unites the city. High above, depth and detail are lost; everything blends into one big whole. The (dissimilar) aerial views of Dublin in the opening scenes of *Goldfish Memory* and *Adam and Paul* represent the city collectively. These views hold a partial but collective vision of the community; each one embraces the vision of a different social group (with shared values and experiences). This is how we remember, collectively as a society.

Collective memory is a joint public construction and a shared notion of how a group conceptualises their past. Sociologist Maurice Halbwachs who theorised the concept as early as the 1920s debates the individual's need for social groups (family, religion, social class, etc.) to obtain and recall memories. He says "the greatest number of memories come back to us when our parents, our friends, or other persons recall them to us" (Halbwachs 1992, p38). This remembrance is not necessarily always direct. Mediated reminding -as in fiction films- is also a way to evoke collective memory that is directly linked to the social groups one participates in. Collective memory, like individual memory, is constructed in the mind; it is artificial, abstract, changeable and at times extreme (i.e. utopian or dystopian). It is an unrealistic (current) image of past events and experiences.

Halbwachs explains the relationship between individual and group memories as follows: "the individual remembers by placing himself in the perspective of the group, but one may also affirm that the memory of the group realizes and manifests itself in individual memories" (1992, p40). Considering the filmmaker as this individual creates curious results. While the director reflects the perspective of the community, he/she adds a unique personal perspective to the memories of the group through their films. Through the perspective of the gay people living in Dublin in the 2010s, Gill reminds us of the gay Dublin of the Celtic Tiger. Similarly,

Abrahamson reminds us of the marginal Dublin of the Celtic Tiger period through the perspective of the working class living in the city in the 2010s.

Mentioning the misrepresented, branded and "mainstream" nature of history in her analysis of Walter Benjamin's work, Boyer (1994, p2-5) emphasises the oppositional potential rooted in collective memory. Grainge also refers to memory as history's conceptual 'other' (2003, p12). Compared to the writing of history that is homoginised and authoritarian, the multiplicity of memory helps "recovering differences." Boyer mentions "memories of the others" and the different voices and positions of women (as in Dublin film *Veronica Guerin*), minorities (as in *Once*), gays (as in *Goldfish Memory*) and marginals (as in *Adam and Paul*). We can add the youth (*Kisses*), the elderly, the disabled (*Inside I'm Dancing*), immigrants/foreigners (*Once*), and the poor/unemployed to the multiplicity of city dwellers Boyer refers to. By addressing diversity, one can bring forth different layers of a city, especially the memories of the ones who are more buried underground (like the hidden traces of old civilisations in different strata on an archeological excavation site).

As sociologist Eviatar Zerubavel states "the present is largely a *cumulative*, multilayered collage of past residues" (2003, p37). Acknowledging the diversity of city dwellers and their partial and fragmented city memories (as well as their nodes and paths) is even more vital in the contemporary city since distinct individuals now share the fast-changing urban milieu. The mediated urban and cultural reconstructions of two recognisable and unalike social groups in *Goldfish Memory* and *Adam and Paul*, filmed a little more than a decade ago, already belong to the past because of the global economic crisis that started in 2008. Curiously the end of the Celtic Tiger has affected the bohemian lifestyle pictured in *Goldfish Memory* much more than the unwanted inhabitants at the margins of society in *Adam and Paul*. In the words of English and film scholar Russell Kilbourn, "Cinema, in this view, is both a form of collective memory and a medium from which the viewer may glean information about the past-however banal or trite or inaccurate" (2010, p27); "there is memory as cultural context within which individual films signify as objects within larger cultural matrix" (2010, p45). In this sense *Goldfish Memory* and *Adam and Paul* are cultural products both exposing and generating collective memory.

Geographer Joshua Hagen talks about "the power of space and place to shape collective memories and simultaneously how collective memories shape experiences of space and place" (Drozdzewski, De Nardi and Waterton 2016, p236). Accordingly there is a strong link between Dublin and the collective memory (or memories) of Dubliners. Common nodes (spaces, places) have a similar affect on city dwellers. The characters in *Goldfish Memory* and *Adam and Paul* rarely share a space in the city, but when they do, it is experienced in a similar way and shapes their collective memory in a comparable manner. With hundreds of parks including Phoenix Park, which is one of the largest urban parks in Europe, Dublin is a green city. Irish landscape is spectacular; humidity, constant rain and little sunshine keep the grass green. With their vivid flowers, bushes and trees that vary with the season, parks are part of the lives of Dubliners coming from any social class on a daily basis. In *Goldfish Memory*, the protagonists appreciate the company of their loved ones and the sun in the park. Adam and Paul also enjoy St Stephen's Green by drinking, smoking and chatting with "the old gang."

"Film, whether fiction, documentary or actuality, is a site for the collective remembering or forgetting of past events" (Carlsten and McGarry 2015, p10). Collective memory is a significant component in urban living. And cinema has the power to expose and generate the collective memory of a social group in an urban context. As French and film scholar Isabelle McNeill claims "cinema, and indeed any cultural object that elicits memory, can interact and intertwine with shared and individual memories, forming an essential part of the process of

individual and collective remembering; film may act as a constitutive element of collective memory: filmic images may shape the form of our memories as well as the content" (2010, p32).

2. CITY STREETS, OR SPATIAL MEMORY AT EYE LEVEL

2.1 View from below: city at eye level

After setting the scene from above in the opening shots, both Gill and Abrahamson zoom into the streets to capture the everyday forms and routines of the city. If the "planner's-eye view" (as well as Le Corbusier's!) is the aerial view (Vidler 2011, p319), then the film director's-eye view is the street view. The subjective camera captures the city at human scale from eye level; the spectator is no longer a viewer observing the city from above as they are in the city experiencing a sense of place and belonging. Like the human eye, the film camera frames a perspectival representation similar to the theatrical streets Vidler describes in "The Scenes of the Street" (2011 [1978], pp16-127): "Thus the street, subject to perspective representation in the ideal theatre, was transformed by this technique and shaped by it." As Marshall McLuhan convinced us, the medium is the message. As opposed to the flatness of the aerial view, the perspectival street view suggests depth, engagement and direction. Through perspective, streets turn into paths that connect nodes. The ground that is objectified when viewed from above suggests, at street level, a journey towards the unknown vanishing point.

In his discussion of aerial and street photography, Vidler explains how "building on the tradition of street photos … increasingly served to counter the aerial views of planners with the "on the ground" views of radicals and nostalgics who called for the art of city planning to recognize the historical and social context" (2011 [2000], p317). He emphasises urban intimacy captured and revealed in street photographs as opposed to the increased objectivity of aerial photographs distanced from the ground. Eugene Atget's black and white photographs of Parisian streets in the 1920s, for instance, may not be idealist, even romantic like the view from above however realism lies in their impurity. Black and white street photographs of New York (Benedice Abbott, Garry Vinogrand), London (John Thomson) and Istanbul (Ara Guler) are no different. These highly textured perspectival views cherish stories of intimate city life of a past time.

Unlike the planner who takes zoning for granted, the film director records the differences of places in a non-linear manner. The picture of the cameraman, for Benjamin, "consists of multiple fragments which are assembled under a new law" (1999). Film offers a constructed urban experience, suggesting the city to be a local network composed of nodes and paths. It is possible to talk about the construction of a new kind of network, even a mediated aura, in film through a temporal representation of space, of the distant as the close. In this way, film may be a tool to shift the gaze from the bird's-eye view to the eye level to create "a unified perceptual image of the city" (Boyer 1994, p13), with its spaces and places. The experienced surface of the city is two-dimensional neither in fiction nor in reality.

2.2 The urban street in architecture and in cinema

In his seminal book, *The Image of the City*, urban theorist and planner Kevin Lynch describes nodes as "points, strategic spots in a city into which an observer can enter, and which are the intensive foci to and from which he is travelling." Nodes may be junctions and/or concentrations (1960, p46-48). A node can be an urban element that one interacts with in a city. Streets are the paths that link the nodes we tend to use regularly. These nodes could be our home, workplace, school, a bench in the park, or favourite restaurant. A city is not complete

with the (interior and exterior) nodes where we stop and do activities. Streets are there as urban veins that connect the dots and keep the city alive. Accordingly, they have a vital role in urban memory-making. A landmark may be significant for the collective memory of a city, but the aura of a city is remembered via its streets.

In her Street Space project, urban theorist Agustina Martire asks "what makes a good street? Is it the boundaries and thresholds created by buildings binding it? Is it the programme and use of those buildings? Or is it the street's identity, history and memory?" (www.streetspacearchitecture.com, accessed 25 March 2017)? The urban street is a shell defined by architecture; life comes into it with nature, people and their activities. Cinema is a best medium to capture street life. Urban streets in Abbott's black and white photographs may be striking frozen images of New York but urban streets and montaged memories in *Taxi Driver* live with joy (or horror).

After its aerial shots, the narrative in *Goldfish Memory* takes the audience from the picturesque representation of the city centre to the newly developed Docklands not far away. It then returns to the streets defined by Dublin's typical Georgian facades of residential architecture, and notable historical landmarks of the city such as the Dublin Castle, National Museum, City Hall, National Library, Christ Church, Gallery of Photography, Liberty Hall and Smithfield. Together with goldfish that seem to be fashionable in the public and private interiors of Dublin during the Celtic Tiger and the one and only taxi driver who hates waiting, what unites these buildings and the lives and stories of the white middle class, mostly gay, protagonists of the film is city streets. The camera constantly cuts to lively streets of Dublin before taking us to homes of people, be it a modern flat, a refurbished Georgian house or a boat. Location choices in *Goldfish Memory* -both indoor and outdoor- either attempt to create a new memory of the city, like the Ocean Bar and Grand Canal Docks, or enhance the vision of a stereotypical Dublin, such as Georgian terrace housing. The camera also visits all kinds of pubs, cafés and clubs, and the city is experienced through the windows of these interior spaces. Dublin is portrayed as an introverted city.

The local working-class pub, The Coal Bunker, in Ad*am and Paul* enhances the memory of the city and the Irishness of Dublin. Pub, short for public house, has a significant gathering role in the Irish culture. Expectedly, Gill prefers a more-European setting for *Goldfish Memory* and locates the now-closed, upscale Ocean Bar in the Docks in the centre of the narrative. "Grand Canal Dock, the area of Dublin's rejuvenated inner city, serves as a backdrop for the bar's young and vibrant customers… Grand Canal Dock and its accompanying eateries and coffee shops are entirely representative of urban regeneration during the Celtic Tiger." Stephen Boyd continues: "the choice of location does feel rather generic, lacking in any local flavour. Just like the characters within the film, the interior of the café bar is depicted as fashionable, shiny and cool, if rather vacuous; an intentional critique of Celtic Tiger Ireland. Given the recent economic downturn within the Republic of Ireland, the representation of Grand Canal Dock in the scene must be viewed as very much a product of its time" (Conolly and Whelan 2011, p78).

In the two films, private space is framed and recorded, later exposed and publicised adding a new layer to the construction of urban memory through film. The distinction between a street and one's home has blurred. The bedroom turns into an urban public space. The idea is to have a city with no distinct centre, made up of a personal accumulation of nodes. Vidler talks about "the communal streets of the city" (2011, p39) and yet Adam and Paul do not belong to the community. That is why run-down back streets and empty alleyways are utilised in their Dublin. Streets in *Adam and Paul* are dirty, empty, ruined, and full of rubbish and graffiti. Though shot simultaneously, the streets of *Goldfish Memory* are clean, well-looked after,

modern and civilised. Unlike *Adam and Paul*, *Goldfish Memory* is a celebration of urban living.

The scene, in which Adam and Paul are high, and happy for a change, is shot on the brand new James Joyce Bridge on Liffey, which opened in 2003, a year before the release of the film. (Damien O'Donnell used the same bridge in *Inside I'm Dancing*, also released in 2004.) In a Q&A session after the film's screening in the Homeless Film Festival in 2012 in the Irish Film Institute, Lenny Abrahamson "confessed" that they chose the bridge for high quality, and free, lighting. Although a high-tech bridge is chosen for this scene, the way it is shot with close-ups of rubbish, and the state the junkies are in make it fit for purpose. The location contrasts with the derelict look of Dublin throughout the film emphasising the altered perspective of the junkies after scoring. The bridge is used as a place to stay, as a node rather than a path. Adam and Paul occupy the bridge instead of passing through. In *Goldfish Memory*, several bridges that connect North and South Dublin are used as aesthetic visual elements in the panorama of the city. Gill uses bridges as streets, as paths.

2.3 Spatial memory of the city

[M]emory and place are inseparable.
Shelley Hornstein (2011, p8)

Art critic John Ruskin's (1885, p169) "memorable" statement: "We may live without [architecture], and worship without her, but we cannot remember without her" brings the discussion back to architectural space. In memory studies, most sociologists, psychologists, historians, film scholars, even architects and urbanists, focus on the link between memory and time, typically the past and history (Halbwachs 1925, Boyer 1994, Grainge 2003). Though memory is mostly interpreted as temporal, this research focuses on the idea that memory is an extension of space. In fact, the dictionary definitions of the concept hardly mention a past time (www.m-w.com, accessed 27 March 2017). Philosopher Edward Casey points out the value of place criticising the primacy given to time and temporal phenomena (1987, p184).

The memorial remembrance works best if the recollection is spatial. Unlike the working mechanism of a computer memory, experiences are best reserved when they are bound to a space. In fact, memory, a concept that dates back to the 14th century, comes from words like "mindful" (Latin *memoria*, from *memor*), "well-known" (Old English *gemimor*), "care" (Greek *mermēra*) and "he remembers" (Sanskrit *smarati*), all of which are about the present rather than the past. These traces of linguistic form are virtual concepts occurring in the mind today, rather that in the material world, or in the past. In Halbwachs' words, "the past is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present" (1992, p40).

In her discussion of Halbwachs' work, Boyer writes "memory always unfolded in space, for when memories could not be located in the social space of a group, then remembrance would fail. Consequently, the activity of recollection must be based on spatial reconstruction" (1994, p26) as memory unfolds in the arrangement of cities and places (1994, p68). She continues "city spaces and architectural landscapes often have been the active systemizers of memory every collective memory always is embedded in a spatial framework" (1994, p137).

If memory and remembrance are spatial as well as temporal, to understand the spatiality of memory, one must study how it belongs to a place; that is the memory of a city, of a street, a square, a building, or a room. In *Losing Site*, architectural historian Shelley Hornstein writes "the memories are indissociable from the places where they were formed" (2011, p8). "We remember best when we experience an event in a place" (2011, p2). Using memory, we try to

understand ourselves and mentally 'project' ourselves from here to there. Such projection to elsewhere help to comprehend our existence here today. This way, we zoom out of our reality (like the Little Prince) as memory happens in the mind. It is illusive and unreal and yet has an excessive mark on how we comprehend the world and how we live.

What is the link then between physical space and memory? Hornstein explains first "architecture exists as a physical entity and therefore registers as a place that we come to remember; and secondly, architecture, whether or not it still stands, can exist or can be found beyond the physical site itself in our recollection of it… That place is the symbolic construction that connects our idea or image of a place to its physicality… This personally constructed place is never a 'real' picture of that place" (2011, p3). This approach can be linked to Martin Heidegger's follower Christine Norberg-Schulz' categorisation of space: physical space that is the material world, perceptual space (or mental space) that is the way we temporarily picture space in our minds, and existential space that is a permanent idea of a space, for instance the concept of home (1988, pp14-29). Home is not remembered as a physical entity but with the thoughts and emotions its idea evokes in the mind.

One's mentally constructed urban memory is closely linked to their city experiences. Through physical or (mediated) visual existence, architecture shapes memory, and remembrance in turn shapes the way we comprehend architecture. Boyer suggests new urban maps and new memory walks in the city (1994, p29) because geographical maps hardly reflect urban memories. How do we make sense of the world around us then? How does memory work? And can that be mapped? Situationists have created psycho-geographical maps as an alternative.

In this context, the concept of spatial memory is beneficial. Psychologists define the term as "the ability to remember the position or location of objects and places" (http://psychologydictionary.org, accessed 1 April 2017). Spatial memory however is much more that locating. Casey states: "A given place or set of places acts as a grid onto which images of items to be remembered are placed in a certain order. The subsequent remembering of these items occurs by revisiting the place-grid and traversing it silently step by step in one's mind" (1987, p183). From an architectural point of view, spatial memory can be defined as the process of recalling or reproducing what has been experienced and retained through mechanisms related to space, particularly architectural space. In fact, philosopher Ernst Cassirer defines space (and time) as the framework that holds all reality, stating that nothing can exceed its spatial and temporal limitations. "We cannot conceive any real thing except under the conditions of space and time" (1923, p42).

What is the role of cinema and particularly fiction films in the creation of spatial memory? Grainge refers to memory as a locus (2003, p12). Hornstein explains "visual images of sites can generate constructed images that in turn can create a memory of a place" (2011, p3). Film space can be a vessel to remember a place or simply to remember. A film, though set in the past, or the future, tells the story if its time. Similarly, as discussed earlier, memory is less about the past and more about the present. In cinema, we view the subjective interpretations of a place at a certain time rather than its so-called objective, profoundly selective and usually dismissive history.

Subsequent examples related to natural Dublin and built Dublin explore the connection between spatial memory and film. Water is a picturesque element in *Goldfish Memory*; the river is beautifully framed as if for a travel guidebook. The way the waterfront is portrayed and used has turned Dublin into Venice. Gill's exquisite beaches and docks, full of love and sunshine, contrast with the dull seafront where Adam and Paul find themselves when they wake up in the morning. Similarly, the landmarks of the city are off-screen, and off limits, and the river is mostly hidden behind walls and obstacles in the film, though the two (ironically)

use Dublin streets more than others. Therefore, the representation of water and waterfront in the films, the former highly positive and desirable, and the latter negative and/or inaccessible, can be considered highly inaccurate, even manipulative, however it evokes the right spatial mechanisms to set the memory of Dublin in each film and the turn the characters into believable Dubliners.

In *The Concise Townscape*, Gordon Cullen argues an all-inclusive approach to cities emphasising the significance of taking "all the elements that go to create the environment: buildings, trees, nature, water, traffic, advertisements and so on, and to weave them together in such a way that drama is released. For a city is a dramatic event in the environment" (1961, p9). A series of urban elements, such as fences, dirty rundown walls with graffiti, and closed doors, prevent visual and/or physical connection in *Adam and Paul*. The onscreen space is layered with commercial signs, neon lights, boom time traffic, people, and, as expected, rubbish. This is the ugly face of the now-fully-capitalist Celtic Tiger Dublin, which lives its own life leaving the uninvited inhabitants out. Walls are impenetrable in the film; they not only enclose and define spaces, but also function as barriers. In *Goldfish Memory*, drama is released with the population of the screen with a combination of natural and built landscape, water and sky as well as the architecture of the city. In both films spatial memory is evoked with urban elements that put the audience in the "right" mood.

In *Goldfish Memory*, we see Georgian houses of Dublin with their flat, geometric facades, brick walls, aligned vertical windows, distinct tall chimneys, and their doors in different bright colours. Gill enhances a memory of Dublin celebrated with its well-preserved Georgian architecture. Abrahamson however brings the other side of Dublin on the big screen -the forgotten face of the fast growing cosmopolitan (and capitalist) city. Adam and Paul take the audience to the not-so-welcoming flats built in Ballymun in North Dublin to clear inner city slums in the 1960s. "Never likely to feature in a tourist information guide, the Ballymun flats were an intrinsic part of Dublin's social history" (Mitchell in Conolly and Whelan 2011, p90). The development had four-, eight- and fifteen-storey blocks, and the towers built in 1966 are now demolished sharing the fate of the iconic Pruitt-Igoe blocks in St Louis, Missouri. Film critic Neil Mitchell states: "Shot by Abrahamson just before scheduled demolition and regeneration work began on the seven towers, the visual tone and atmosphere of the film is set by the graffiti, abandoned shopping trolleys, bored teenagers and general neglect hanging over the area" (Conolly and Whelan 2011, p90). This is a different kind of zoning based on socio-economic class; while the privileged enjoy historical houses of Dublin the marginalised live in unhealthy and unsafe blocks at the periphery of the city. Residential architecture is brought onto the screen to remember, first the Georgian architecture that Dubliners are proud of and then the Ballymun flats that everybody prefers to forget.

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Specific to Dublin

The selective architectural representation in *Goldfish Memory* portrays a mainstream touristic Dublin, free from its dark and dirty back alleys, social housing as well as the city's immigrants, homeless and rain. The city is remembered through a carefully selected collection of pretty pictures and privileged inhabitants; Gill can even be accused of spreading propaganda. *Adam and Paul*, on the other hand, is a film of 'the other,' of the misfits, contested spaces and not-wished-for stories of the city. If *Adam and Paul* is about (revealing and) remembering the dark side of contemporary Dublin, *Goldfish Memory* is about forgetting it.

If a city is a personal accumulation of nodes and paths, which would be your Dublin? This might not be a fair question since the world is not black or white, as it sometimes is in cinematic representations. However the utopian Dublin of Gill and the dystopian Dublin of Abrahamson are useful to understand different dynamics of the city. A gigantic creature like a city has all kinds of attractions to offer to all; for that reason the way it is experienced by different groups, be it its citizens, tourists, politicians, and immigrants varies. Moreover, different socio-economical and different age groups experience cities and benefit from urban living differently. Cinema in particular gives us insight about different possibilities a city can offer to different groups. These two city films are about Dubliners as much as they are about Dublin. Both films benefit severely from the city they are shot in. Both Dublins exist. Nevertheless by framing an extreme perspective of Celtic Tiger Dublin, each film goes beyond its locality and starts to address global problems. As film scholar Natalie Harrower states: "The Dublin presented in *Goldfish Memory* is urbane and cosmopolitan, and it marks the new internationally promoted face of Ireland" (2007, p224). Gill's Dublin could have been any consumerist European city, and Abrahamson's Dublin has the same problems any large city has for the homeless. Mitchell notes "Adam and Paul's vision of the city and its underclass is instantly recognizable to Dubliners and resonate with those who have experience of life in any major urban environment" (Conolly and Whelan 2011, p90). Any city has its nodes and paths. And the network we choose to live in is what defines our urban experience and spatial memory.

3.2 General conclusions

In *The Architecture of the City*, architect Aldo Rossi writes: "The collective and the private, society and the individual, balance and confront one another in the city" (1984, p22). It can be argued that the individual urban vision of a film director turns into, or at least becomes a "part of the developing collective memory" (Boyer 1994, p315) after projecting the film repeatedly on the silver screen or, recently, on the computer screen. As an outsider to the (architectural) design world, the director understands and interprets the local urban reality and spatial memory in a distinct way through his/her camera. As Benjamin states in *Illuminations* (1999, p236): "By close-ups of the things around us, by focusing on hidden details of familiar objects, by exploring common place milieus under the ingenious guidance of the camera, the film, on the one hand, extends our comprehension of the necessities which rule our lives; on the other hand, it manages to assure us of an immense and unexpected field of action."

This study focuses on the view from above versus below: the (so-called) objective versus the subjective, the rationalised versus the idealistic, the homogeneous versus the heterogeneous, orderly versus the chaotic. In this plurality, which includes everyday rituals and places (including private spaces), there is a potential to understand the complexity of the city space.

Both cities and their memories are plural. Who is the city for? The city is for diverse groups and individuals who choose to live and remember the urban landscape in dissimilar ways through urban nodes and paths they inhabit.

"An alert and alive memory connects spontaneously with place, finding in it features that favor and parallel its own activities" (Casey 1987, p186). Mediated experiences of a city via film are as powerful as first hand experiences when it comes to memory making. Films, especially fiction, create powerful remembrances to explore both the physical and invisible/intangible features of a city. Films allow for "visualizable gaps," which may lead us to hidden meanings (Boyer 1994, pp18-19).

Like any other representational art, film starts questioning our own lives, streets, and cities. The camera abstracts reality by framing and flattening it from a multi-dimensional existence to an audio-visual immaterial object with x, y and time dimensions. It is the power of this

abstraction that turns film into a tool to better understand cities. Benjamin (1999) states: "Our taverns and our metropolitan streets, our offices and furnished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories appeared to have us locked up hopelessly. Then came the film and burst this prison-world asunder by the dynamite of the tenth of a second, so that now, in the midst of its far-flung ruins and debris, we calmly and adventurously go travelling. With the close-up, space expands; with slow motion, movement is extended."

Just like the 19th century photographs of Eadweard Muybridge, in which he explores the hidden aspects of bodily movement, film reveals the hidden aspects of architectural and urban spaces imperceptible to the human eye by, for instance, altering the speed of the film, or zooming in and out. These are qualities of the lens of the camera, which do not exist for the human eye. Benjamin (1999) supports this argument saying that: "Evidently a different nature opens itself to the camera than opens to the naked eye – if only because an unconsciously penetrated space is substituted for a space consciously explored by man; … the camera intervenes with the resources of its lowerings and liftings, its interruptions and isolations, it extensions and accelerations, its enlargements and reductions. The camera introduces us to unconscious optics."

Doing so, the medium of film focuses on different aspects of reality, and reveals (or alters) the meaning behind it and the memory related to it. This is because the camera is different from the eye, but also we start seeing spaces and cities through the viewpoint of someone else, in this case the film director. Is not this the power of any form of art -the 'magic' of perceiving, feeling and recollecting the world through the eyes of the artist?

Hornstein expresses "each of us carries around an architectural imaginary world constructed in our memory that is different, parallel and even compatible with the physical site… Yet the triggers must exist in the physical world for the recall to carry on into future generations" (2011, p5). Different people use different streets and parts of a city. Their experience is personal and unique; city memories vary. Thus we all have a different Dublin, New York, Istanbul, or Konya.

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To protect themselves in their aquatic larva stage, **caddisflies** build and live in mobile cases that are made out of pebbles, twigs, or whatever they can find in their habitat, put together with a natural 'mortar' coming from the glands in their mouths. They disguise themselves by looking like the territory they live in. Moreover, as they grow they enlarge the cases, and finally seal themselves in for the pupa stage. Is it our immense ability to hold the memory of spaces and places we experienced the past, what made us smarter that the caddisfly and gave us our civilisation?

The reshaping of the physical environment as to need -be it survival, dwelling or pleasure- is in the nature of living beings. While the caddisfly enjoys its home, humans reproduce their environment in the form of a painting, novel or film in search of a meaning for their *existence there*. This study deals with the role film might play in the portrayal and understanding of urban peripheries and their collective and spatial memories. Since the Lumiere Brothers, the director as an urban observer, a flâneur, constructs the architectural experience and spatial memory, replacing the habitant; "the camera is substituted for the public" (Benjamin 1999). Doing so, film reveals and generates spatial memory.

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